



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Testimony of
Representative Matthew Lesser, 100th District
February 10, 2011

In Support of HB 5802, An Act Adopting Certain Safety Recommendations of the
Thomas Commission

Good morning Representative Dargan, Senator Hartley, Rep. Giegler, Sen. Guglielmo and honorable members of this Committee,

I wish to testify in support of House Bill 5802, *An Act Adopting Certain Safety Recommendations of the Thomas Commission*.

On a Sunday morning a year ago this month, as I was enjoying my morning coffee at my home in Middletown, I heard my windows rattle.

As information started flowing in, I soon had an appreciation of the terrible tragedy that had left six workers dead at the Kleen power plant on a hill overlooking the city in which I live. That evening, I went up to the disaster site when it was still chaotic and we still did not know if we had been able to account for all the workers. I saw the wonderful and selfless efforts of first responders and emergency personnel from all over the state and all over New England. I can assure you, honorable members, that the people of Middletown appreciate the help and support.

In the days and weeks afterwards, at funerals and memorial services, I had the opportunity to meet with many of the family members of the victims, and many of the workers at the plant – some of whom are here today.

In the aftermath of the disaster, there have been several investigations and reports into what happened. It is clear today that the disaster could have been avoided.

Former Governor Rell convened a commission headed by Commissioner Thomas of the Department of Public Safety to look at the investigations into the causes of the disaster and propose remedies to ensure that this never happens again.

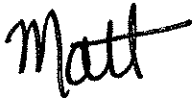
This bill (1) bans flammable gas blows, (2) requires that power plant builders pay to hire independent safety inspectors and train local fire marshals on safety issues, and (3) requires that the Siting Council work with other agencies to ensure that power plants are being constructed safely.

I urge the Committee to report on these proposals favorably. This is not the last word on worker safety, but it is an important first step.

We should all agree that nobody should have to put their life on their line, simply to go to work.

Thank you for hearing my testimony, and for your kind consideration.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt". The signature is stylized with a long, horizontal stroke extending from the end of the word.

Matt Lesser
State Representative